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## OPEN LETTERS.

**What name shall be used? What is an authority?**

If a worker in the botanical vineyard who has neither right nor claim to the title of "Systematic Botanist," may be permitted to ask a question concerning the proper nomenclature of seed-plants, perhaps a little illumination may be graciously let into his unsystematic brain-box by some of those who not only claim the title, but wear it right royally. The question is a brief one:

If we are not to use the oldest attainable specific name for a plant, what specific name are we to use?

Certainly we can not use the "oldest binomial," for our notions of a genus, and its inclusions are constantly changing. Nor is it particularly helpful to suggest that the name sanctioned by "authority" is the proper one, for after all—and I speak with bated breath, as one treading on holy ground—who *is* this "authority" anyhow? Is it the first worker in a group or the last? Is it the dead or the living? Is it this institution or is it that? Or is it the consensus of workers along some line? I, for one, have always supposed that attempts to constitute one's self, or one's descendants, or one's co-workers a botanical, zoological, geological or petrographical hierarchy was, to say the least, unscientific. If great groups of humble workers—such as those who gain a little cheap notoriety by trying as best they may to get together a local flora in which the results of their best bibliographical and analytic ability are collected—are to be decapitated at one fell blow, it is important to have it understood just why they are disposed of and just who volunteers to pull the guillotine-lever.

There is such a constantly increasing number of young, misguided enthusiasts among the group which we may for convenience call the "botanists of North America," that something more than reading the riot-act will be necessary to convince them that, after all is said, the temper of Charles Darwin is not a pretty fair one to try to imitate. Consequently they will doubtless continue to struggle along, doing the best they can, differing from "the authority" when they honestly have to differ, submitting their efforts to the test of time and the correction of wider and abler research, receiving honest criticism with what grace human nature permits and, withal, meaning no affront, personal or otherwise, to the authorities with whom they cheaply differ.

On the whole this second question troubles the writer as well as the first. An answer is respectfully asked. "What *is* an authority?"—CONWAY MACMILLAN, *University of Minnesota*.

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NOTES AND NEWS.

HENRI JUELLE has, by three distinct lines of proof, shown that when in the light the absence of  $\text{CO}_2$  accelerates the transpiration of green parts of plants, this acceleration is due to the fact that the energy of the rays absorbed by the chlorophyll is not employed for the decomposition of  $\text{CO}_2$ , but operates entirely in increasing transpiration.